



East
Northamptonshire
Council

Personnel Sub-Committee

Minutes of a meeting held on 15 February 2010 at 6.00 pm at East Northamptonshire House, Thrapston

Present:

Councillors
Roger Glithero (**Chairman**)
David Brackenbury
Sylvia Hughes
Andy Mercer (Leader of the Council)

Also present:

Councillor
Steven North (Deputy Leader of the Council)

David Oliver
Chief Executive (DO)
Mark Lovell
Executive Director (ML)
Sharn Matthews
Executive Director (SM)
Katy Everitt
Head of Organisational Development (KE)
Keith Osborne
Democratic Services Manager (KO)

Action

1.0 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

1.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2009 were approved and signed as a correct record.

2.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2.1 Councillor Wendy Brackenbury sent her apologies.

3.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 Councillor Andy Mercer declared a personal interest in item 8 as a consultant in IT systems relating to Revenues and Benefits and Customer Services and remained in the meeting during the consideration of that item.

3.2 David Oliver, Sharn Matthews, Mark Lovell, Katy Everitt and Keith Osborne declared a personal interest in item 7 (Review of Employee Pay and Benefits) as the proposals going forward would affect their welfare.

KO

3.3 Katy Everitt declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 8 (Management Restructuring) and left the meeting before the consideration of the item. Keith Osborne declared a personal interest in this item, as he potentially could be affected by later consideration of the structure at middle management level. He

left the meeting before consideration of the item.

- 3.4 David Oliver, Sharn Matthews and Mark Lovell declared a personal interest in item 8 but remained in the meeting during the discussion on the item.

4.0 QUESTIONS

- 4.1 There were no questions.

5.0 XcHANGE GROUP

- 5.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Xchange Group held on 24 November 2009 and 5 January 2010 were received. The minutes are set out on pages 4 to 8.

6.0 STAFF VACANCIES – SMT REVIEW

- 6.1 Further to minute 7.0 of the last meeting, ML reported that SMT was recommending the permanent deletion of some posts to the Budget Review Group but the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Sub-Committee were being kept informed.

7.0 REVIEW OF EMPLOYEE PAY & BENEFITS

- 7.1 Further to minute 7.0 of the last meeting, DO reported that SMT had discussed the outcome of the employee workshops with the Budget Review Group in January and considered the balance to be struck between delivering cost savings and maintaining terms and conditions of employment which would enable the Council to attract and retain high quality staff.

- 7.2 The following proposals - which SMT believed would not impact unfairly on any individual or group of employees – had been negotiated with Unison:-

	Saving £000
No cost of living rise for 2010/11.	110
Remove BUPA.	70
Move to HMRC fuel rates (maximum 40p per mile).	15
Interest charge for new car loans (not those already taken out).	5

Total savings in 2010/11 **200**

The proposals would be put to a ballot of Unison members in parallel with the ongoing consultation with all staff, which would finish on 24 February. A further meeting with Unison would be held on 1 March.

- 7.3 Nationally, Unison was seeking a claim for a 2.5% pay rise but the Employers' side wanted a pay freeze. The Regional Unison Organiser had expressed concern that, should the Council agree a pay freeze locally the Council would be moving away from the 'Green Book' terms and conditions if a pay increase was agreed nationally. However, noting the national position, she had asked that, should a pay freeze be negotiated nationally, the Council would abide by any other changes to Green Book terms and conditions agreed as part of the national deal, provided they gave rise to no additional cost.

RESOLVED:

That the current position be noted and the Regional Unison Organiser be advised that the Council is minded to abide by any other changes to Green Book terms and conditions that are agreed as part of the national deal, if a pay freeze is negotiated nationally, provided -

**DO/
KE**

- (a) there is no additional cost, and
- (b) any changes are confined to 2010/11 only.

8.0 PROPOSED MANAGEMENT RESTRUCTURE

- 8.1 The Sub-Committee received the report of the Chief Executive on a proposed management restructure at Heads of Service level, and the reasoning for it.
- 8.2 After introducing the report, the Chief Executive circulated a summary of the feedback and a revised timetable which took into account the concerns raised in the feedback. This would allow time for the middle management structure to be developed before a further period of consultation. It was noted that this summary and revised timetable would be circulated to staff the following day.
- 8.3 Members took time to read the summary of feedback in some detail, and asked that staff be thanked for the constructive nature and quality of the feedback that had been given on the proposed restructure.
- 8.4 Comments were made concerning the team structure below Heads of Service in some areas and there was a discussion of the importance of retaining the cross council customer focus created by A4E during and after the restructure. Councillor Andy Mercer (who had declared a personal interest in 3.1 above) commented upon the importance of having the appropriate customer permissions before sharing data between systems in these two areas.
- 8.5 Members **agreed** the proposed revised timetable for the restructure process, which was scheduled to result in appointments to Heads of Service posts by 14 May 2010.

SMT

9.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 9.1 The date of the next meeting was rearranged to take into account the timetable for the management restructure. The planned meeting of 23 March was cancelled and replaced by a meeting at 6pm on Friday 9 April.

KO

Chairman



Xchange Group

Minutes from the meeting held on Tuesday 24 November 2009

Present:	Palden Dorje	PD	Chair & Unison Representative
	David Oliver	DO	Chief Executive
	Julie Lee	JL	Customer Services Representative
	Symon Adamson	SA	Revenues and Benefits Services Representative
	Carolyn Aldridge	CA	Policy & Community Development Representative
	Katy Everitt	KE	Head of Organisational Development
	Pauline Matheson	PM	Organisational Development Representative
	Rachel Reeds	RR	Resources Representative
	Heidi Lightfoot	HL	ICT Representative

Minutes: Alice Duggan

1 **Apologies for absence**

Had been received from Thomas Morrissey and Romina Vella.

2 **Minutes of the last meeting 1 October 2009**

The minutes of the last meeting were approved.

3 **Matters arising from the minutes**

KE updated the group on issues discussed at the Personnel Sub Committee.

4 **Staff lunch room facilities**

SA expressed a view from Revenues and Benefits that the Staff lunch room was not up to standard. Complaints included the lack of a clock and the cleanliness of the sink and fridge. KE asked SA to raise the concerns via the Amenities e-Form in the first instance.

SA

5 **Alarm testing on Friday mornings**

SA expressed a view from Revenues and Benefits that the alarm was being tested at an inappropriate time as it disrupted telephone conversations with customers. CA raised a query regarding the legal requirement for fire testing as there has not been a fire drill for some time. KE asked SA to raise the concerns via the Amenities e-Form in the first instance.

SA

6 **Corporate letters**

SA raised the issue of the new letter headers which were causing technical difficulties for Revenues and Benefits. KE noted that two separate headers were available, one for a single page and one for multiple pages. KE asked SA to raise the concerns with the communications team in the first instance.

SA

7 **Mileage costs for training**
HL raised a query from ICT regarding the amount that could be claimed for mileage when staff attend training courses. KE confirmed that this was reviewed annually by Mark Lovell in line with the cost of fuel and would be looked at again in April 2010.

8 **Bright Ideas Scheme**
KE advised the Group that Bright Ideas is being reviewed and individuals who have put suggestions in through the scheme will be contacted to give their feedback on the process with a view to improving the scheme.

9 **Best Public Sector to work for survey**
KE reported that there had been a very good response rate to the survey and the deadline for submissions was December 3rd. She asked the Group to remind their service area teams to complete the survey.

ALL

10 **Review of employee pay and benefits**
KE updated the group on plans for the staff workshops which would take place in December. 8 sessions were planned and staff would need to book onto sessions using the LMS. During the workshops staff would be given facts about how much money needs to be saved and a list of potential areas where money can be saved from. Staff would then work in groups and consider the following questions:

- Which items on the list are you most concerned about being implemented?
- Which items on the list are you least concerned about being implemented?
- Is there anything we haven't included on the list which you think should be on it? (must bring savings to staffing costs)
- Are there any benefits (which will not cost the Council anything) that you would like us to include in your benefit package?

DO explained that some things to be considered include:

- BUPA
- Reduced contractual hours
- Company cars

KE explained that today is the start of the consultation process. She explained that some items on the list relate to all employees of the Council whereas others, like company cars, only relate to a small proportion of employees. KE confirmed that this will be taken into account during the consultation.

KE also advised the Group that it is not a redundancy scenario so the Council is not proposing to make any redundancy payments.

DO explained that once the workshops have taken place there will be further meetings with UNISON and Members to agree the way forward – they will consider the outcome of the workshops, and where possible, will focus on the items listed by

staff as “least painful” to remove/review. He explained that employees will be informed and consulted about the proposed removal of any pay or benefits and the intention is to have made, negotiated and agreed any decision with employees ready for implementation on 1 April 2010. He did, however, clarify that BUPA will remain in place until at least the end of September 2010.

CA asked for clarification about new employees joining the Council and their entitlement to BUPA. KE clarified that BUPA will not be provided to new employees joining the Council until a decision is agreed about what will happen with BUPA in the future.

KE confirmed that the majority of employees have already agreed to the removal of life insurance she explained that where possible agreement will be reached with staff but where that is not possible the Council will dismiss and re-engage employees.

11 **Dates of future meetings**

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 5 January 2010.



Xchange Group

Minutes from the meeting held on Tuesday 5 January 2010

Present:	Palden Dorje	PD	Chair & Unison Representative
	David Oliver	DO	Chief Executive
	Symon Adamson	SA	Revenues and Benefits Services Representative
	Carolyn Aldridge	CA	Policy & Community Development Representative
	Katy Everitt	KE	Head of Organisational Development
	Pauline Matheson	PM	Organisational Development Representative
	Rachel Reeds	RR	Resources Representative
	Tom Morrissey	TM	Environmental Services Representative
	Heidi Lightfoot	HL	ICT Representative

Minutes: Romina Vella

1 Apologies for absence

Had been received from Julie Lee and Brian Harrison.

2 Minutes of the last meeting 24 November 2009

The minutes of the last meeting were approved. .

3 Matters arising from the minutes

- 3.1 Minute 4 – Amenities had been contacted regarding the cleanliness of the staff lunch room facilities.
- 3.2 Minute 5 – it was noted that Amenities had posted a message on Eunice that the fire alarm and panic button would be tested between 8.30am and 8.45am.

4 Member update – Council approach to cost savings

- 4.1 KE welcomed Councillor Roger Glithero who wished Happy New Year to all. Councillor Glithero expressed his thanks on behalf of all of the Members for the staff participation at the Employee Pay and Benefits Workshops. The Budget Review Group would continue to work on options for savings including the cost of living increase, BUPA and mileage rates. Cllr Glithero also discussed how Members are supporting staff to make financial savings including not applying any increase to their allowances for the 2nd year running.

5 Corporate Policy – bad weather

- 5.1 CA raised the subject of the recent heavy snowfall. DO confirmed that there was no corporate policy for this type of extreme weather and that each person should take responsibility for their own safety and arrangements should be organised within service areas. KE agreed to look again at the message that had been published on Eunice previously and update it.

KE

6 Feedback from employee workshops – pay and benefits

- 6.1 DO fed back from the workshops, which most staff had attended, and confirmed that

there were fairly consistent views. Staff were most concerned about the reduction of hours and staff were least concerned about the cost of living pay rise. The option of discontinuing BUPA had a varied response.

- 6.2 SMT would be looking at cars and essential users which had also been on the list and may need to re-evaluate who is classified as an essential user. That is not part of the review of pay and benefits because it already takes place every 12 months.
- 6.3 KE listed some of the '*no cost*' benefits which had been suggested at the workshops including reviewing the flexibility of flexi time and buying annual leave.
- 6.4 The BRG would be meeting with Unison and proposals for the way forward would then go to Personnel Sub Committee. Changes would be implemented by 1 April 2010.
- 6.5 CA said that her workshop group had discussed the Management Structure and asked DO if a review of CMT and middle managers was being carried out. DO said that the BRG were looking at all options but no decision had been made.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting would be held on 16th February 2010.

KE